

Connecticut Public Transportation Commission
Minutes of August 2, 2012

ConnDOT Headquarters, Conference Room B
Berlin Turnpike, Newington

Attendance: Members: Christopher Adams, Morton Katz, William Kelaher, David LeVasseur, Yvonne Loteczka, Kevin Maloney, Robert Rodman, Richard Schreiner, Richard Sunderhauf and Alan Sylvestre. **ConnDOT staff:** Richard Jankovich, Kathleen Jennings, Dennis King and Sherry Osterling. **Guests:** Kim Dunham (GHTD), Terry Hall and Steven Troster.

Chairman Maloney called the meeting to order at 1:30pm. The minutes of the meeting of July 12 were approved as written.

Featured Speaker

Richard Jankovich, ConnDOT Assistant Rail Administrator, provided an update from the Office of Rail on a variety of projects and issues.

The M-8 car build is continuing with 405 cars on order, 38 coming from Kobe and the balance from Nebraska. There are 122 cars conditionally accepted and 176 expected by the end of the year. The contract is expected to be complete by May 22, 2015. The plan is to have a uniform M-8 fleet with none of the older cars retained. The older trainsets will be scrapped.

The north platform of the new West Haven station is completed and the canopy is under construction. The south platform and canopy are also under construction and the pedestrian bridge is complete. North side lot construction is ongoing. Some 5 miles of Track 3 in the vicinity of the station has been reconstructed and is back in service.

Catenary replacement continues on the New Haven Main Line, with the section between milepost 48 and 55 due to be wrapped up by 2014. The program began over 10 years ago. Four track outage work must be completed at night between the hours and 1 and 5 am, since the segment of catenary being replaced has to be powered down. During the daytime, the catenary power remains on and trains can pass through the work area at 70 mph with the protection of flagmen and track restrictions. The rehab of the Norwalk and Saugatuck movable bridges are going to be especially challenging.

The Stamford Station garage was constructed in 1985 and expanded in 2004. By 2006 with ongoing capacity issues, the state began to look at options for replacement, the need for which was reaffirmed in 2010. An RFQ was issued in 2012 to prequalify potential firms to construct a 1000 space garage here. The issue is a lack of spaces and not a structural deficiency with the 1985-vintage structure.

The plan is to replace the existing structure, expand the availability of parking and improve multimodal access. There are four responsive firms looking at the RFP, which is due on September 24, 2012. During the process of construction, parking will have to be maintained

and the existing garage demolished. The Department is committed to TOD on this site and is trying to minimize public cost.

Shore Line East is going through a \$60 Million program of improvements. These include the construction of the Westbrook Station and parking expansion, Branford and Guilford parking expansion and extension of the north platform in Clinton. Sidings in Guilford, Old Saybrook and New London are being electrified to facilitate operation of the M-8's.

Phase 1 of the Westbrook construction was completed in July and will be complete by May 2013. Branford and Guilford projects are due to completed by May 2014, with an October award and projected start date in December 2012. The Clinton project is going to bid next June/July for completion by fall 2014.

Ridership on the New Haven Line was 38,240,392 in CY 2011. So far in 2012, there have been 19,416,423 riders; an increase of 4.3%. For CY 2011 Shoreline East saw 614,089 trips. So far in 2012, the service has carried 301,235, which is an increase of 3.4% over the prior year. During the OpSail event in New London on July 6-9, 3,525 rides were recorded to the event.

Amtrak is talking about a next generation route in the Northeast Corridor and has started an environmental assessment for a super express high speed rail route that would be 93 minutes respectively Boston to New York and New York to Washington. The route would be in place by 2040. Parsons Brinckerhoff/AECOM is completing the assessment process for them. A lower speed express service would have a stop in Hartford and dial in to the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield expansion.

New Haven-Hartford-Springfield is expected to launch in June 2016. Amtrak's 6 trains would be expanded with 10 commuter trains. ConnDOT is planning on using Shore Line East equipment until new equipment can be purchased.

The State has a \$7.5 Million Rail Freight Infrastructure Program under way. They will be working with the freight operators and anticipate that everyone will submit a project for selection. A potential project is on the Naugatuck Railroad, where the operator is looking at the creation of a transfer station for municipal solid waste at Watertown.

Mr. Jankovich reported that RailAmerica, one of the larger regional freight railroads in the area, was recently purchased by Genesee & Wyoming Railroad.

Comments from the Public

Terry Hall spoke further on the Amtrak expansion in the Northeast Corridor. The first phase is planned south of New York City. The plan is to start in September or October and bring the stretch between Trenton and New Brunswick to 165 mph. They eventually intend to go express every half hour New York-Washington.

The corridor is filled to capacity in the air and rail is really the only option for expansion here.

Comments from Operating Entities

Rich Sunderhauf distributed copies of the Roadeo edition of CTTRANSIT's newsletter. He passed out a handout regarding a new run bid in August and improvements to the holiday schedules. He also reported the Enfield park and ride lot was moving to the Enfield Mall.

Bill Kelaher was down in Washington at the Capitol working on legislative issues. HR7, the House transportation funding bill had an amendment detrimental to commuter rail and Amtrak that would have taken these programs out of dedicated funding streams and had them compete annually for funds. The amendment was defeated.

The food and beverage service at Amtrak is being privatized.

The majority of MTA unions are operating without a contract, as are Amtrak unions. The management and unions are operating according to the existing contracts and are waiting to see what develops based on the funding situation.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Maloney will meet with Commissioner Redeker on August 17 to see how the commission and ConnDOT can be more responsive to each other's needs.

Old Business

The fall public hearing schedule was discussed. Commissioner Katz noted conflicts with the September meetings and the Jewish holidays (note that the dates for the first two hearings were rescheduled after the meeting).

Volunteer chairs for the hearings are:

Bridgeport, Sept 12 - Richard Schreiner
Storrs, Sept. 27 - Kevin Maloney
Winsted, Oct. 10 - Fred Riese
Windsor, Oct. 16 - Morton Katz

New Business

There have been no new appointments to the commission.

Next month's meeting will be held in the multipurpose Room at GHTD's offices in Union Station, Hartford. Kim Dunham indicated that commissioners should park in the Spruce Street Lot.

Chairman Maloney adjourned the meeting at 3pm.